

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
MARCH 8, 2013
ANGELA BENSON
SB 262**

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and esteemed members of the Public Health Committee:

My name is Angela Benson and I want to thank you for letting me talk at this time about SB 262.

I was not diagnosed with any mental illness until I was 42 years old. After being hospitalized 13 times between 2000 and 2002, I was told I had Bipolar Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder, and Anxiety.

During this difficult time in my life, I discussed some thoughts I was having with my psychiatrist about hurting someone who had caused pain in my life. I think we have ALL had resentments toward people who have wronged us. The doctor explained to me that if I was planning on hurting this person, then the person would need to be contacted and that the doctor had a “duty to warn.” It was then that I realized that I was never planning on hurting anyone – I was the one hurting. I never have committed any acts of violence in the past and never have since.

I feel that if the authorities are now called, especially for a misunderstanding, then people that are already vulnerable would now have police records and it would add to the stigma. It would make it difficult to get jobs. If they are going to have a police record and have never been in trouble, I do not think that this would help.